

## Message Text

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PAGE 01 PANAMA 00064 042047Z  
ACTION SS-25

INFO OCT-01 ISO-00 SSO-00 /026 W  
-----042059Z 071078 /61  
O 042021Z JAN 77  
FM AMEMBASSY PANAMA  
TO SECSTATE WASHDC IMMEDIATE 0236

S E C R E T PANAMA 0064

STADIS//////////

EXDIS

FOR ASSISTANT SECRETARY SHLAUDEMANN

EO 11652: GDS  
TAGS: PFOR, MPOL, PN  
SUBJECT: PROPOSED DEPLOYMENT OF MILITARY POLICE COMPANY

REF: STATE 314162

1. PURSUANT TO YOUR REQUEST, I CALLED A SPECIAL MEETING OF PRC TODAY (JANUARY 4) TO CONSIDER PROPOSAL TO AUGMENT SOUTHCOM FORCES BY ONE MILITARY POLICE COMPANY. I SUMMARIZED FACTORS CONTAINED IN REFTEL WHICH MIGHT WARRANT RECONSIDERATION OF THE PROPOSAL AT THIS TIME AND RECALLED THAT GOVERNOR AND I HAD PREVIOUSLY SUPPORTED THE CINC'S PROPOSAL FOR AUGMENTATION.

2. THE CINC ADVOCATED CONTINUED PRC SUPPORT FOR AUGMENTATION PROPOSAL BASED ON FOLLOWING GROUNDS:

(A) INTELLIGENCE REPORTS INDICATE INDIVIDUALS CONNECTED WITH BOMBING INCIDENTS CONTINUE TO BE ACTIVE, AT LEAST IN SURVEILLANCE AND RELATED ACTIONS. ALTHOUGH IT WOULD BE FOLLY FOR GN TO RESUME BOMBINGS, FURTHER INCIDENTS

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CANNOT BE RULED OUT.

(B) THERE IS POSSIBILITY THAT A CANAL ZONE FRINGE ELEMENT MIGHT UNDERTAKE BOMBINGS OR OTHER DISRUPTIVE ACTIVITIES.

(C) THERE IS POTENTIAL FOR POSSIBLE POLITICAL TURBULENCE

DURING JANUARY, NOT ONLY FROM JANUARY 9 ANNIVERSARY BUT ALSO FROM AUSTERITY MEASURES BEING PROMULGATED BY GOP WHICH COULD SPARK DEMONSTRATIONS.

(D) PRESENT SECURITY MEASURES HAVE REQUIRED DRAWING FROM TACTICAL UNITS IN ORDER TO MAN GATES TO MILITARY INSTALLATIONS AND CARRY OUT PATROLS. THESE TROOPS ARE NOT WELL TRAINED TO COPE WITH CIVILIANS, DEPENDENTS, DIPLOMATS, ETC., WHEREAS MPS ARE SPECIALISTS IN THESE FUNCTIONS. CINC'S GREATEST CONCERN IS THAT USING TACTICAL UNITS FOR SECURITY FUNCTIONS DEGRADES THEIR READINESS TO EFFECTIVELY PERFORM CANAL DEFENSE MISSION.

(E) MP COMPANY OF ONLY 177 MEN (IF AT FULL STRENGTH) CAN BE ASSIMILATED INTO COMMAND ALMOST IMPERCEPTIBLY. CINC SUGGESTED THAT NOTHER AIRCRAFT OR TWO COULD BE ADDED TO THOSE TRANSPORTING THE NEXT BATTALION SCHEDULED FOR JUNGLE OPERATIONS TRAINING. MP COMPANY WOULD BRING NO UNIQUE WEAPONS BUT ONLY ITS NORMAL SMALL ARMS AND JEEPS.

3. IN SUMMARY, CINC EXPRESSED OPINION THAT AUGMENTATION PROPOSAL MAKES SENSE AND THAT IT MEETS A CONTINGENCY HE WANTS TO PREPARE FOR. AUGMENTATION BY ONE MP COMPANY DOES NOT ADD TO COMBAT POWER BUT REPRESENTS ADDITIONAL PROTECTION FOR US LIVES AND PROPERTY BY VIRTUE OF ITS DETERRENT ASPECT WHILE AT THE SAME TIME PROVIDING AN ENHANCED FEELING OF SECURITY TO CANAL ZONE RESIDENTS. THE CINC REQUESTED CONTINUED PRC SUPPORT FOR THE PROPOSAL.

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4. IN SEPARATE STATEMENTS BOTH THE GOVERNOR AND I SHARED THE CINC'S ANALYSIS AND AGREED THAT THE PROPOSED AUGMENTATION WOULD NOT CREATE POLITICAL DIFFICULTIES FOR US IN PANAMA. THE GOVERNOR POINTED OUT THAT PAN CANAL CAPABILITIES ARE VERY LIMITED AND THAT HE WOULD CALL AGAIN UPON THE MILITARY VERY EARLY SHOULD THE SECURITY SITUATION DETERIORATE.

5. WITH RESPECT TO TIMING, THE CINC INDICATED HE HAD FIRST HOPED TO HAVE THE MP COMPANY IN PLACE PRIOR TO THE JANUARY 9 ANNIVERSARY. HOWEVER, BECAUSE OF THE DECISION TIME REQUIRED AND THE PROXIMITY OF THE 9 JANUARY ANNIVERSARY DATE, HE NOW CONSIDERS IT PREFERABLE TO ALLOW THIS DATE TO PASS AND TO BRING IN THE MP COMPANY WITH THE NEXT UNIT SCHEDULED TO RECEIVE JUNGLE TRAINING IN CANAL ZONE, I.E., AROUND JANUARY 16.

6. THERE IS CLEAR PRC CONSENSUS THAT THE AUGMENTATION PROPOSAL IS PRUDENT AND STILL WARRANTED AND THAT IT CAN

BE CARRIED OUT WITHOUT ANY MAJOR RIPPLES. I RECOMMEND  
CONFIRMATION OF THE DECISION.

7. I AM COORDINATING THIS MESSAGE WITH THE GOVERNOR AND  
THE CINC.

JORDEN

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## Message Attributes

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